

Chris Brown

The Champagne sparkles

Chemical-free pool has Spanish motif, ceramic mural

By Susan Doyle

The Champagne Pool is ready.

Closed for renovations for more than a year, the adult-focused fitness facility and pool at 321 King Edward Avenue has been given a thorough facelift inside and out.

The overhaul has included the installation of a new water filtration system, making Champagne Bath the only Ottawa area pool that is chemical-free.

Renovations to Champagne Bath are all in keeping with the original Spanish-inspired architecture of the heritage structure built in 1922.

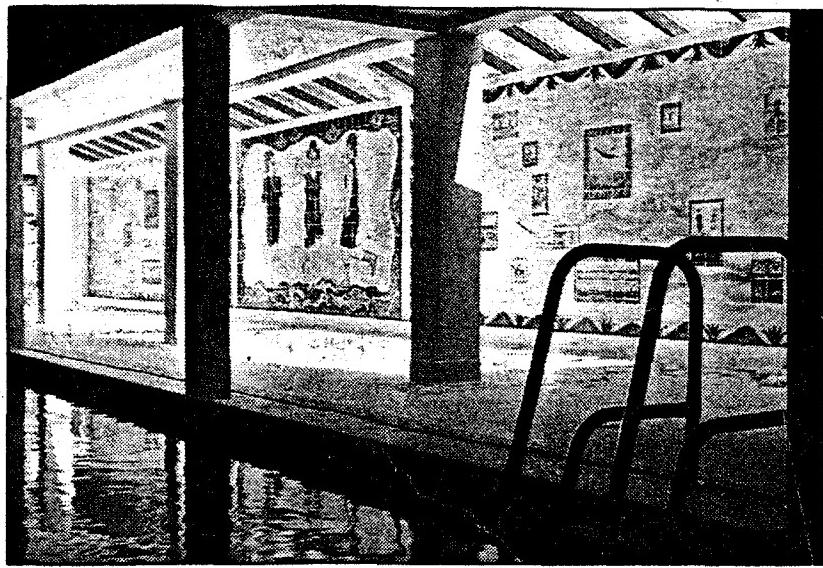
Pool Director Daniel Berubé notes that the soft pastel colors of white, grey and pink, as well as the grillwork and Spanish colonial motifs used throughout, are all in keeping with the original design.

In addition to the installation of an elevator to allow complete access for physically handicapped people, Champagne Bath now boasts a weight room, two large multi-purpose rooms for teaching and for rental by the community, a nine-foot wide atrium the entire length of the pool, a mezzanine outfitted with stationery bicycles overlooking the pool, a spacious lobby and completely restored change rooms.

The pool itself has been transformed. All new ceramic tiles in the pool and on the deck, plus huge, brightly colored ceramic murals of 1920 era bathers on one wall, sparkle in the sunlight which beams down through new skylights.

But the major renovation and the one which most excites Berubé, is not even visible, except maybe in the absence of the tell-tale chlorine blue of the pool water. The water is perfectly clear. In fact, says Berubé, "not one chemical has been added."

The new filtration system at Champagne Bath replaces chemicals in the water with salt. "The salt is added at a rate of 4,000 parts per million, which is the same as we have in our eyes. It's a natural system that won't irritate hair, skin or eyes, because it is similar to the natural combination of salt in our bodies."



Bruno Schlumberger, Citizen

Skylights and mural of 1920-era bathers

"Already popular in Australia and parts of South America, Berubé says the system, called Hypo Cel, was expensive to install. "We were concerned about the dangers of using chlorine, and had been looking for a safer, less unpleasant system," he says. "The salt in the water produces a natural ingredient equivalent to chlorine, which keeps the pool clean and clear. The system is entirely controlled by computer. I am certain swimmers here will really enjoy this system."

Although there will be some swimming instruction for children on Saturday mornings, Champagne Bath's programs are adult-focused.

Aquafit classes, best described as aerobic dancing in shallow water, will be featured three times a week in the evening as well as twice a week in the morning. Berubé plans to have instructors work closely with participants so that the program can be adapted to individual needs. Classes are one hour in length. He points out that age is not a factor, but that people signing up should consider themselves "fairly fit."

Adult swim has been allocated more than 60 hours of pool time a

week at Champagne Bath. From its 6:30 am start each day, there is ample time for adults to slip in for a few laps either before or after work and even at lunch time. The cost is a reasonable \$1.75 per visit or a three or six month pass can be purchased.

The supervisor of the weight room will devise a personalized program for anyone wishing to use the facility. After about a month, this program will be reassessed by the instructor. Open each day from 10 am until 8:30 pm, Berubé expects this to be a popular spot.

Adults will also find the new sauna a welcome addition to the facility. Berubé anticipates that a snack bar may also be added in the near future.

Although programs will start in September, the building will not be officially reopened until January, when all the final details of programming and construction have been completed.

For more information on programs or to inquire about renting the pool or multi-purpose rooms, call Champagne Bath at 564-1033. Registration for all programs is ongoing and must be done in person.